

REMARKS

Claims 18 to 26 were rejected as obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Chinese Patent Publication CN1626256.

The above-identified U.S. Patent Application, Ser. No. 10/589,716, is the U.S. National Stage of PCT/EP 2005/001606, filed on February 17, 2005. Thus the effective U.S. filing date of the above-identified U.S. Patent Application, Ser. No. 10/589,716, is **February 17, 2005** in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 363 and M.P.E.P. 1893.03 (b). Thus in the case of this application the filing date is not the date that it was received in the U.S. Patent Office mailroom or the 371 (c) date.

However Chinese Patent Publication CN1626256 has a publication date of June 15, 2005 according to the EPO website data base and also the front cover of this Chinese Patent Publication. Thus **June 15, 2005** is its effective date as a prior art reference.

Thus CN1626256 was published too late and is not a valid prior art reference that can be employed under 35 U.S.C. 102 or 103 to reject applicants' claimed fire protection system.

Accordingly withdrawal of the rejection of applicants' pending claims 18 to 26 as obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over Chinese Patent Publication CN1626256 is respectfully requested for the aforesaid reasons.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawing be further amended or corrected in formal respects to put this case in condition for final allowance, then it is requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment and the case passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing the case to allowance, he or she is invited to telephone the undersigned at 1-631-549-4700.

In view of the foregoing, favorable allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

/Michael J. Striker/

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